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## General Comment

[Edited by Gilbert Campbell Scoggin, The University of Missouri.]

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"Literature and Liberalism" is the title of an interesting article to be found in the *Columbia University Quarterly* for December, 1916. The author is Professor Nelson Glenn McCrea, who has here amplified a paper which he read at the tenth annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States in Philadelphia, April 14, 1916.

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On February 19 and 20 the private library of the late Professor Charles G. Herberman was dispersed at the Anderson Galleries in New York. Professor Herberman long taught Latin in the College of the City of New York and he was editor-in-chief of the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*. This library, evidently brought together by a man of wide interests, consisted of some eight hundred volumes, covering many fields. There were included many early editions of the Greek and Latin classics, books illustrating the history of printing, works on art and on the history of classical scholarship. Among the editions of Horace was that of Lambinus, now rather difficult to procure. The history of the Catholic church in America was well represented.

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The Classical Association of Virginia met in the John Marshall High School at Richmond on November 20, 1916. The following papers were presented: "The Letters of George Long to Henry Tutwiler," by Professor Thomas Fitzhugh, of the University of Virginia; "Ideas of Beneficence among the Greeks," by Professor W. P. Clark, of the College of William and Mary; "Some Glimpses of the Greek Spirit in Ancient and Modern Literature," by Professor A. W. McWhorter, of Hampden-Sidney College; "The Vital Relation of Latin to Practical Life," by Miss Ethel Black, of the Fredericksburg State Normal School; "Practical Values and Practical Interest in Elementary Latin," by Mr. S. P. Cowardin, Jr., of Richmond; "Good Old Mantuan—A Textbook of Elizabethan Schools," by Professor Wilfred P. Mustard, of Johns Hopkins University.

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If newspaper reports are to be trusted, Dean Thomas C. Blaisdell, of Pennsylvania State College, is of the opinion that our schools and colleges are too much hampered by the traditions and superstitions of the Middle Ages. He believes that at the present time very many high-school graduates do not go to college because subjects are now required which these young people do not care to take. We pay slight attention to the wants of twentieth-century life. These difficult subjects should be removed from the college curriculum and

new subjects "not now thought of" should be introduced. Just how one should go about introducing a subject "not now thought of" he does not state. There have always been some people who believe in first doing a thing and thinking of it afterward; and to this class the dean seems to ally himself. He has compiled some statistics whereby it is shown that Seniors in our colleges outstrip all the other classes in scholastic standing! Perhaps some day he can continue this useful investigation and show that the students in our graduate schools are better scholars than the class just entering high school.

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In the vacation number of *Poet Lore* for 1916, Professor George Norlin, of the University of Colorado, writes on "An Ancient Realist." From the *Greek Anthology* he has brought together for study the contributions of a poet who is known from that great collection alone, Leonidas of Tarentum. To Leonidas are ascribed more than one hundred epigrams of the collection, Meleager being the only poet who outranks him in number. Professor Norlin contrasts the Asiatic exuberance and passion of Meleager with the more staid and even melancholy traits of Leonidas. The poems are presented in translations by various hands. He includes the twenty-first idyl of "Theocritus" which he is inclined to ascribe to Leonidas. In summing up his chief characteristics he says: "The Muse of Leonidas has many moods, playful and bright as well as sad. He is indeed, as Sainte-Beuve pointed out, the most representative poet of the *Anthology*, but that which distinguishes him from all the rest, and which appears in the idyl of the fishermen as in his epigrams, is his sympathy for the poor, their incessant struggle against want, the patience and the courage of their narrow lives."

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On November 7 and 8 there were dispersed at Sotheby's in London some very unusual books. Among the association books was Dean Swift's copy of the Elzevir *Virgil*, edited by Daniel Heinsius in 1636. Readers of Addison's *Taller* papers may recall that this was the favorite edition of Tom Folio, because in the *Aeneid* he had found two commas instead of a parenthesis; while the beauty of the *Georgics* had been enhanced by the turning upside down of a semicolon. Included also was a very fine copy of Richard Taverner's *Catonis Disticha Moralia*, published at London in 1540. As is well known, the *Moral Distichs* formed a favorite textbook throughout the Middle Ages, and their popularity began to wane only in the eighteenth century; school editions were issued even in the nineteenth century. Shakespeare probably studied the book at the Stratford Grammar School. The earliest English translation to be printed was that of Benet Burgh, and it came from the press of Caxton about 1477. Of later translations, certainly none can compare in interest, for Americans, with that of James Logan. Bearing the title *Cato's Moral Distichs Englished in Couplets*, this was published in 1735 by Benjamin Franklin. As the book is so very rare and few will ever see it, the following transcription from "The Printer to the Reader" may interest admirers of the shrewd author

of the *Autobiography*: "It would be thought a Piece of Hypocrisy and pharisaical Ostentation in me, if I should say, that I print these Distichs more with a View to the Good of others than my own private Advantage; And indeed I cannot say it; for I confess, I have so great Confidenc in the common Virtue and Good Sense of the People of this and the neighboring Provinces, that I expect to sell a very good Impression." What would have been the thoughts of this thrifty printer if he could have foreseen that in the year 1911 a copy of this book would bring in the auction room the goodly sum of thirteen hundred dollars?

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As early as 1886 the French Minister of Public Instruction recommended that a catalogue should be made of all the fifteenth-century books preserved in the public libraries of France. This laborious undertaking was assumed by Mlle Pellechet, who lived to complete only the first volume of her *Catalogue général des incunables des bibliothèques publiques de France*. Her materials for a second volume were placed in the hands of M. Polain, who saw the work through the press; and the third volume, up to the letter *G*, has appeared. The German government has provided for a *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* and a commission has been working for several years under the general direction of Dr. Haebler in Berlin. As the German libraries do not contain copies of all fifteenth-century books, an attempt has been made to get authoritative lists and descriptions of such books to be found in other countries. In England no very systematic work has been done, but the exhaustive catalogues of numerous special collections form a basis. Most of the European countries had made some arrangement before the war for assisting in this great enterprize—Sweden, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. As is well known, there are some very remarkable collections of fifteenth-century books in our own country, but many of these volumes are frequently passing from one owner to another and it is often difficult to know their whereabouts. Mr. John Thompson, late librarian of the Free Public Library of Philadelphia, for many years was engaged in the task of gathering material for a proposed "List of Incunabula in American Libraries." After Mr. Thompson's death this material was first placed in the Newberry Library of Chicago, but it has now been removed to the Widener Memorial Library of Harvard University where it has been placed under the care of Mr. George Parker Winship. Some form of publication will probably be undertaken ultimately under the auspices of the Bibliographical Society of America, but not until the general catalogue of Dr. Haebler has appeared. It would thus form a sort of supplement to that work. Mr. Winship, I understand, is ready to furnish scholars any reasonable information about this material.

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In the *Fortnightly Review* for November will be found an article by R. Brudenell Carter on "Science and Education." This article by a man of

science, by reason of its calm and, on the whole, reasonable presentation of the claims of this important branch of human knowledge, deserves to be widely read by teachers of the humanities. Mr. Carter, like President Eliot, seems inclined to overemphasize the modern world's indebtedness to science for innumerable conveniences of daily life. As has recently been urged by Mr. Stearns, headmaster at Andover: "In spite of all science has done to make life more comfortable and more pleasant in recent years we could more readily, and with less disaster to the human race, part with these benefits than we could with those less tangible but infinitely more valuable possessions which largely lie within the realm of ideas, which through the centuries have moulded and lifted humanity, and which have been given to us by the world's great philosophers and thinkers." But certainly the men of science have a strong point in their insistence that the organs of sense must be correctly trained. It is probably true that the general powers of observation have been too much neglected by the modern world, but in so far as we seek to train these powers we shall be imitating the ancients themselves. As Mr. Carter says, "The senses are the source of all knowledge," and I am inclined to believe with him that "to see and hear quickly, to describe and repeat accurately are the most important attainments toward which every end should be directed." His broad views may be gathered from the fact that he does not believe that science necessarily forms the best subject-matter for the young or that it forms the best foundation upon which to rear the great superstructure which it can provide. He certainly attacks a vulnerable spot when he criticizes the inclination on the part of many to see nothing but perfection in the ancients. But it is only fair to point out in this connection that classical scholars themselves have been the first to recognize this bias. Professor Allen, of Harvard, was constantly censuring the attitude of narrow pedants who, in his quaint phrase, always approach the ancients on hands and knees. And as for the fact that after the revival of learning men were inclined to rank the Greek philosophers among the gods, we must be careful to recall the circumstances. Professor Gilbert Murray, in the introductory chapter of his *Rise of the Greek Epic*, shows that the Greeks themselves were eminently progressive. In the department of medicine they had advanced far beyond the point occupied by Europeans a thousand years later. If a man wished to know the best that was to be known in medicine, he necessarily turned back to Hippocrates and Galen, who could teach him more than any contemporary. I will only add in passing that the branch of science which in our day has been raised to the highest degree of excellence is medicine and surgery, which have their roots far in the past. With his interest in science it was probably inevitable that Mr. Carter should feel too little regard for Porson and the technical side of scholarship. He certainly goes too far in his assertion that "lettered ignorance" still clings to strongholds set up for it by endowments of an earlier day. I will not believe that he believes that Chichele, say, and Wolsey, and William of Wykeham could justly be accused of endowing strongholds of ignorance. The humanist is

eager to learn from the man of science all that science has to teach; and of course he must ultimately depend upon the specialists in science. Mr. Carter recognizes the value of instruction in language, for, as he says, so much depends upon a thorough knowledge of words and of correctness of expression. He seems to think, however, that one's native tongue alone is sufficient for a thorough knowledge of language and its powers. Here he should defer to the knowledge of the specialists in language. They, one and all, will tell him that the man who knows only one tongue has not the faintest conception of the powers of speech, even of his own.

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The presidential address before the American Historical Association at Cincinnati last December was delivered by Professor George L. Burr, of Cornell University, who spoke on "The Freedom of History." The address is reprinted in the *American Historical Review* for January. According to Professor Burr it was necessary that freedom should come to human thought before history could be born, and it was no mere accident that it "was in the freest of ancient commonwealths at the very acme of its freedom" that this birth came. Homer, Hesiod, the Ionian philosophers, Hecataeus, all had led the way, but their work still was far from history. Now Herodotus, the father of history, came forward. The title chosen for his work, *ιστορία*, was destined to remain for all such works. The word itself meant "research," and this first historian's method differed from that of the poets. He was to enter a field sacred to literature and poetry, but he was to concern himself, not with gods, but with the actions of men, and that too through "plodding inquiry." His plan was to recount great deeds, not only of Greece, but of all the world. "As, like a man of science, he has put first his method—as, like a philosopher, he has defined his general aim—so now, like an artist, he seizes him a specific theme, with unity and action of its own. Disdaining all prelude, he launches on the story of that great Graeco-Persian world-struggle he will make central, refusing, even for that, all causes older than the human ones he can himself investigate." This emancipation of history from poetry Professor Burr thinks can be matched only by the later separation of natural science from theology and philosophy, henceforth to depend on experiment and observation. Although Herodotus was interested primarily in human affairs, he was still under the influence of the theology of his day, and was very reverent. "The men who open for their fellows the door to a new era—an Augustine, a Dante—must ever be men of reverence." Herodotus everywhere sought for evidence and led the way for Thucydides, who likewise concerned himself with human matters. By the time of Aristotle history already was a technical word, to be sharply distinguished from poetry. The difference was not a matter of form, but of content. Thucydides reached the highest point attained in antiquity, and after him there was stagnation. Later historians strove to tell a pleasing story in an attractive style. There came a break with philosophy, and then history became the tool of the partisan. Christianity helped to free history

from rhetoric and again emphasized truth. Now the tendency was to scorn grammar even, on the theory that deeds, not words, were the all-important thing. Christianity being historical worked for good, but it did not confine itself to human life. The idea of Jehovah was introduced and all history was forced to accord with this new dominant idea. Earth continued to be the scene of action, but profane history that could not be reconciled with sacred history was rejected. Through such writers as Augustine, allegorical and mystical meanings were everywhere introduced and history was lost in theology. The Renaissance "did not at first greatly advance the freedom of history," because the humanist strove to exalt his patron and to display his Latin style. But the two civilizations now confronting each other reacted mutually for emancipation, and "when a Valla . . . found flaws as well in sainted Vulgate and in scarce less sainted Livy, the age of free inquiry had dawned." The old spirit of Herodotus again arose and men gave themselves to research, and this spirit has not languished since that time. Some check came at the time of the Reformation, but both sides now were driven to appeal to sober fact and history, with a consequent "keener insight and fairer judgment." Even the French Revolution, with all its destructive influences, caused no great impediment. Books and manuscripts, heretofore inaccessible, were now assembled and placed at the disposal of scholars. It is interesting to note that the classical realm is not the only one to have suffered from civil wars and secession. This is clearly seen in the relations existing among history, political science, sociology, anthropology, and some other branches.

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Lord Rosebery has somewhere commented on the fact that the combination of statesmanship and bookishness is becoming rarer at the present day. He had in mind men of the type of Gladstone, who amid all the turmoil of busy public life, continued to find comfort and delight in books. Readers of Morley's fascinating *Life* will recall how Gladstone constantly communed with Homer, St. Augustine, and Dante. These three were his old favorites, but his tastes were catholic, and his range of reading not confined to any period. He was able to read the works of all the O. Henries, the H. G. Wellses, and the Arnold Bennetts of his day almost as rapidly as they were able to write them; and of theological books he never tired. It is not difficult now, however, to point to men in public life who have literary tastes, and our own American republic can boast of such a man as its present guide. That there were able public men in other days who professed to scorn ancient literature may be seen in the remark of Cobden's quoted in another paragraph. With the gradual increase of knowledge inevitably there will come some change in the opinion as to what constitutes an educated man. Nothing is more wearisome than the all too familiar inane struggle between so-called men of science and the humanists, in so far as either party would banish the other from the halls of learning. An educated man at the present day must have some insight

into many great fields of knowledge, and nothing is more to be deplored than the widespread tendency toward what may be called a superficial specialization. A recent writer in the *Educational Review* has pointed out that men of science are beginning to appreciate the fact that mere mechanical work in the laboratory is insufficient. There must be general courses of broad scope, having as their object the teaching of man's place in the universe. The study of mere blind forces of nature fail to satisfy man. Huxley taught that science *per se* was unmoral and that morality in some form must be taught. Not long ago the vice-chancellor of Oxford University emphasized the fact that science must be taught and that nowadays no man can be considered fully educated unless he be familiar with the scientific point of view. But he rightly insists that a knowledge of man is of greatest importance. Mr. A. W. Pickard—Cambridge, in a pamphlet entitled *Education, Science, and the Humanities*, seems to take a very sensible view of the matter. Having himself studied natural science, he can appreciate its worth in relation to other branches of knowledge. He thinks that the mere classical scholar is inclined to give too much attention to textual criticism; and speaking with reference to English schools, he is of the opinion that too much time is now given to Greek and Latin composition. I suppose that this last has special reference to verse composition; and in any case would not apply to America. As to verse-making, even in a great English school nearly a century ago the following anecdote may give some light. I quote it from a chatty little book called *Mr. Gladstone at Oxford, 1890*, and evidently it was a favorite story of Gladstone's, as it is found twice recorded in the *Life*:

Now when I was at Eton there were four classes of boys. There was the idle and clever boy, and perhaps he had the best enjoyment of all out of the school; then there was the idle and stupid boy, and he was well off, too, for his idleness compensated for his stupidity. The clever and industrious boy was not so well off; he did everyone's verses for them, and was generally made a beast of burden. But the worst off of all was the stupid and industrious boy. He had nothing to compensate for his stupidity. I remember a specimen of the last class who had somehow or other achieved with huge labor a copy of iambics. His tutor took them up between his finger and thumb, when they were presented, and said with a contemptuous air, "Todd, what demon has prompted you to rush into Greek verse?"

Of the direct value of Greek versifying I am not competent to speak, never myself having been schooled in it; but I am inclined to think it well worth while to keep such training accessible for the occasional Jebb who is sure to profit by it. Textual criticism must always play an important part in thorough classical training, but the final judgment on any scholar will depend upon his success in using such scaffolding for the erecting of a completed structure. Certainly no scholar should sink to the level of mere technicalities, but should keep his interests alert. Such interests are easily fostered by recreative reading outside one's technical field. Bookishness, as Lord Rosebery understood the term, should be a marked characteristic of the scholar.